

Tale

Feathers

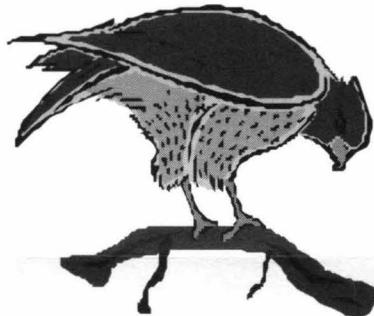
Jan 2003

Volume 70
Number 1

January Meeting and Speaker

Our Monthly Meeting and Speaker Series continues on Tuesday, January 21 at 7:30 p.m. at the Powder Valley Nature Center.

The evening's speaker will be Dr. Patricia Parker, Chair, Department of Biology, University of Missouri-St. Louis. For several years, Dr. Parker has been leading research on numerous bird species endemic to the Galapagos Islands, including studies of mating systems and inter-island species variation. Her presentation, "Bird Health in the Galapagos Islands: The Threats from Disease," will highlight the last two years of research into this growing threat to the island archipelago. In addition to such traditional threats as habitat loss, birds such as the Galapagos hawk and the waved albatross are having to contend with diseases thought to be imported to the island through human activities. This is sure to be an informative program.



Also, meet other society members and discover opportunities for involvement throughout the organization. Open to all, members or not. Refreshments will be available.

From the intersection of Interstates 44 & 270, take Watson Rd. to Geyer Rd. Turn north on Geyer for 200 yds. to Cragwold Rd. Go west on Cragwold for 1 mi. to nature center entrance on right. Follow drive to parking lot. Enter building through left entrance.
Questions, call Mitch Leachman at 314-739-5112.

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PLEASE JOIN US

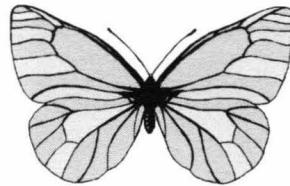
Please join us for the next newsletter mailing party on Jan. 24, 2003. Meet new people and help out your Audubon Society at the same time.

Call Anne Bolte at (314)832-0938 or Bill Salsgiver at (636)225-1490 for details



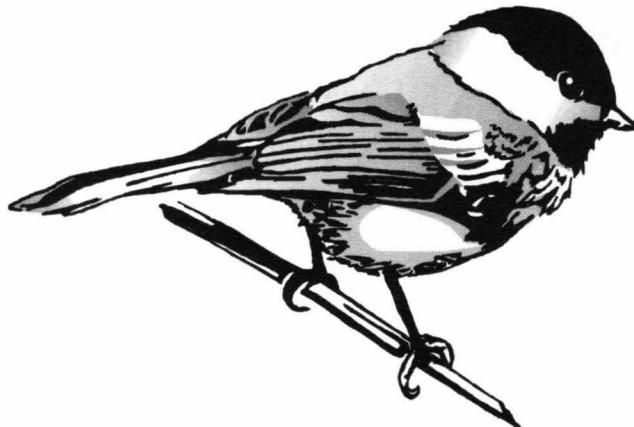
THE MASTER NATURALIST CERTIFICATE

St. Louis Community College, Meramec Campus is offering the certificate in co-operation with St. Louis Audubon Society, Missouri Native Plant Society, North American Butterfly Association, Webster Groves Nature Study Society, St. Louis Astronomical Society and St. Louis Herpetological Society. The program consists of three main components:



1. Three core college credit courses-
Conservation and Ecology
Field Botany
Field Zoology
2. Three elective college credit courses-
Marine Biology
Field Experience in Marine Biology
Desert Ecology
Field Experience in Desert Ecology
Ozark Ecology
Field Experience in Ozark Ecology
Intro to Geology
Intro to Astronomy
Meteorology
3. Six Elective non-credit courses offered through Continuing Education. Workshop topics include the study of reptiles and amphibians, butterfly natural history and identification, identification of local and migrant birds, astronomical exploration with binoculars, native plant natural history and identification, ect. Continuing Education workshop offering will change each semester.

For more information regarding this exciting program go to the college website www.stlcc.edu or call 314-924-7601 or if you would like to receive a schedule of college credit or continuing education courses call 314-924-7777 or log on to www.stlcc.edu.



Conservation Report

-Sue Gustafson

On Saturday, December 7th, I represented St. Louis Audubon Society at the third meeting of the newly forming Missouri Bird Conservation Initiative (MoBCI) held in Columbia, Mo. This endeavor strives to implement the North American Bird Conservation Initiative at the state level by bringing together organizations working on bird-conservation projects encompassing the full spectrum of bird species (waterfowl, shorebirds, songbirds, etc. - see www.nabci-us.org/). Our meeting resulted in the formation of an interim board of directors comprised of representatives from state and federal government agencies and non-government organizations, such as Audubon. The board confirmed the stated purpose of MoBCI, which is "to work together to conserve and restore bird populations and their habitats." MoBCI will build on the synergies inherent within the collaborating partners and will hopefully reduce redundant/duplicate efforts. As the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) is a launching force behind MoBCI, the newly hired MDC/Audubon Missouri Director of Bird Conservation will continue the momentum begun at the three start-up meetings. The next step will entail reaching out to all groups working on bird conservation projects in Missouri and formulating an inventory of such projects. Stay tuned for further progress about this exciting new initiative.

EAGLE DAYS at the Old Chain of Rocks Bridge

Sponsored by the Metropolitan Park & Recreation District

Saturday and Sunday
January 18 & 19, 2003
8 a.m. - 4 p.m.



Educational eagle program given every 1/2 hour 10 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. Viewing scopes on the bridge permit close-ups of eagles. Re-enactors are on hand to acquaint visitors with aspects of Lewis & Clark's 1804-06 expedition, the Corps of Discovery.

Parking: Free parking is available at two satellite lots, the St. Louis Welcome Center at Riverview and I-270 and North Riverfront Park, off of Riverview south of the waterworks. A **FREE** shuttle will be available from both locations. Parking at the Missouri bridge entrance is \$5. Expanded **FREE** parking will be available at the Illinois bridge entrance. Note: most of the programming is at the Missouri bridge entrance and in the middle of the Old Chain of Rocks Bridge. Bring your binoculars and dress to stay warm.

For more information call Trailnet at 314-416-9930, the Missouri Department of Conservation at 314-231-3803 or the Illinois Department of Natural Resources at 618-462-1181.

Act for the Birds

Sally Conyne

We have a window of opportunity. Today, the vast majority of the species of birds in North America still exist in viable numbers in some remnant of suitable habitat. Today, we who love birds and the natural world in general exist in greater numbers than ever before, and those numbers are growing rapidly. And today, we have the tools that allow us to know and monitor that fragile world with depth and breadth that was unimaginable 10 years ago, let alone 102 years ago when the first Christmas Bird Count (CBC) was held. With these elements in place, we are all able to participate in conservation efforts. In fact, it is our mandate - our obligation - to become citizen scientists.

Over one hundred years ago, a handful of Christmas Bird Counters began a tradition by recording the species and their numbers in 25 circles around the continent. This year you can be among the 10's of thousands who gather data in some of those same circles and in over 1900 additional sites. But now, rather than waiting months to enjoy or study those data, you'll be able to see the results as soon as they are entered into the on-line database. And right now 102 years of reports are available for many uses, but especially conservation. Using this immense vault of CBC data (found at <http://audubon.org/bird/cbc/hr/index.html>), you can now conduct your own local, regional, or national study with relative ease. Please tell us what you find.

More than 15 years ago, Project FeederWatch (visit <http://www.birdsource.org/pfw>) became a continent-wide project sponsored by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, the Canadian Nature Federation, Bird Studies Canada, and National Audubon. Following a careful protocol, thousands of dedicated observers - some elderly, some housebound - have collected data about the status of feeder birds across the continent from November through April. When participants reported an illness among House Finches, the network of FeederWatchers made it possible to track the disease, identified as avian conjunctivitis, as it spread throughout the eastern half of the country. Additionally, the huge amount of data gathered during this project is precious to the understanding of climate's impact on bird populations as well as of the general health of these populations. All of this information is now submitted and quickly available on-line.

The Great Backyard Bird Count or GBBC (**available at <http://www.birdsource.com/gbbc/>**) will be 6 years old this **February 14-17**. Submitted entirely on-line, the approximately 50,000 checklists from every state and province provide a winter snapshot of the status of our birds on that count weekend. A monitoring project that is designed to allow beginners and experts alike to participate, GBBC aims to engage and educate families and individuals in the hopes that they will continue their involvement through other bird monitoring projects. As with other projects, GBBC data become more and more valuable with each year that the information is compiled. Explore the results from your state or province, a region of the continent, or all of North America.

When we began to receive letters, emails, and phone calls in August about dwindling bird numbers in a variety of neighborhoods around the east and mid-west, we were alarmed and concerned. These reports seemed to coincide with the spread of the West Nile Virus. As this year's warm months came to an end, we could do little but provide information (available at <http://audubon.org/bird/westnilevirus.html>), caution against inappropriate reactions like rampant pesticide application, and educate regarding alternative responses. We had no broad scale, summer monitoring data for comparison to recent 2002 surveys.

However, this winter, we can all do much more. While no one was thinking of a scenario like the West Nile threat when these citizen science monitoring projects were developed, in the end, we have built a platform for an informed response to just such an event. The winter projects are in place and years of data have been collected. So let's use these tools to learn as much as possible about the impact of this disease on our winter bird populations as we continue to collect long-term data. It is, of course, critically important that we maintain the same protocol as in previous years when we collect data this winter.

Continued on page 7

It Might be Cold, but it Will be Fun!

By Jim Malone

Already this winter birding season we have had a great collection of birds on our local outings. The waterfowl are here in force and gull numbers are rising daily. Sparrows are in and the raptor variety is getting very interesting. This is the season for citizen scientist birders to help out with the local Christmas counts, and for everyone going to Riverlands to wear most of the clothing they have at home.

January 4 (Saturday) Riverlands Environmental Demonstration Area, 9:00 AM As temperatures drop and the major rivers freeze, an amazing change occurs in areas like Riverlands EDA. This is one of the few locations where the river stays open (because of the locks and dam), and the birds definitely know it! Bald Eagles stand around on ice chunks and perch in nearby trees, various gulls fight over bits of food found in the ice, and waterfowl concentrate in open stretches of water. This is probably the best time of year to visit Riverlands (if you have the proper clothes). Expect it to feel 10-20 degrees colder than it does in town and you will probably be about right. Come join us as we search for those interesting gulls, smews, and odd raptors. To get there, take route 367 /67 North from I-270 to the base of the Clark bridge (which crosses the Mississippi). Before the bridge, turn right at the Fisca gas station and you will be there. Pass the gas station and turn right at the first road (Weiss Road) and we will meet in the parking lot at the Teal Pond.

January 12 (Sunday) Forest 44/Tyson, 9:00 AM Just so you don't get the idea that we spend the entire winter at Riverlands, we have included something a bit different this year. We will visit the Forest 44 area and see what birds are congregating around the springs and in woods and fields. This trip will include a bit of walking, but nothing too strenuous. After Forest 44, we will drive the short distance to Tyson Research facility. The feeders behind the gate house at Tyson typically have a great assortment of winter finches and woodland birds, and the Tyson Woods can harbor just about anything. To get to the starting point for this trip, Take I-44 West from I-270 to the highway 141 exit. Go South (left) on 141 to the first road on the right (Meremac Station Road). Go about a mile West on this road and turn left at Hillsboro Road. Follow this road about 1/2 mile to the conservation area.

February 8 (Saturday) Riverlands Environmental Demonstration Area, 9:00 AM That's right, we are back at Riverlands again. Why fight the best birding location in St. Louis for winter birding! This area always has lots to offer. Come and find out why most serious St. Louis birders spend a great deal of their winter time here.

Sure winter birding in St. Louis can be cold, but there is lots to offer, and great companions to share it with. Come out and join us to see just what you might be missing!

Enjoy Life! Go Birding !!

St. Louis Audubon Society's Bi-Annual Birdseed Sale

Friday, Jan. 24th from 5:00 p.m. until 7:00p.m. and Saturday, Jan. 25th from 9:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. Order for the early winter season and be the first on your block to start seeing the flocks migrate to your feeders. Order by Monday Jan. 20th for the 25th and 26th pickup. If you want to help Vicki with the bird seed pickup, contact her at the numbers below. Due to a poor seed crop, some seed prices have unfortunately risen.

Make check payable to St. Louis Audubon Society and mail to:

Vicki Flier
18 Algonquin Wood Place
St. Louis, MO 63122
314-968-9166 rrvvcc@aol.com

Pick up will be at the NEW location of Wild Bird Center

12792 Olive Blvd.
Bellerieve Plaza
Creve Coeur, MO 63141

Dave Pierce will be giving 10% off all purchases made by Audubon members when they pick up their bird seed.

All proceeds from the birdseed sale fund the education outreach programs.

January Birdseed Order Form

Make check payable to:

St. Louis Audubon Society and mail to:

Vicki Flier
18 Algonquin Wood Place
St. Louis, MO 63122

Name _____

Address _____

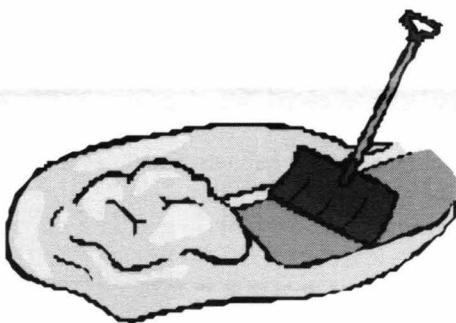
Phone _____

Bird Seed Type	Lbs/ Bag	Qty.	x \$	Subtotal
Black Oil Sunflower	25 lb.		x \$14	
	50 lb.		x \$26	
No-Waste Mix no milo, has hulls	25 lb.		x \$10	
	50 lb.		x \$19	
Premium No-Waste no milo, no hulls	20 lb.		x \$10	
	40 lb.		x \$18	
Safflower Seed	25 lb.		x \$20	
	50 lb.		x \$36	
Thistle/Niger	10 lb.		x \$10	
			Total	

Continued from page 4

Heading into the future, take a look at eBird (available at <http://www.birdsource.org>), a new BirdSource tool that allows anyone to report any species, anywhere, and anytime. eBird opens a new era of citizen science when we can have all of the baseline data as they are needed, which will help our birds in a time of increasing threats from habitat loss to West Nile virus. All citizen scientists can participate in eBird and other projects through BirdSource at their level of expertise and as their time allows.

The window of conservation opportunity through which we gaze must become a door through which we step into action. Report banded, tagged, and marked birds as well as your observations of rarities and unusual occurrences. Get involved with your local Important Bird Area program <http://audubon.org/bird/iba/index.html> , helping to monitor birds at some of their most important places. And participate in citizen science projects at your level of ability and comfort. Remember, you will double your impact if you take along a friend; and you'll multiply it many times over if you include a scout troop or a class of kids.



NOTICE

Reference: *Did You Kill All Those Birds* Dec. 2002

This is a plea to the gracious lady who called my home inquiring about volunteering to assist the education committee.

I apologize for accidentally deleting your call. Please call again.

Dale Ponce
(636) 394-6011

Tale Feathers

Tale Feathers is published monthly by the St. Louis Audubon Society. Messenger Printing prints 2,500 copies of each newsletter on recycled paper using soy ink. Anne Bolte edits the newsletter.

St. Louis Audubon Society 2002 - 2003

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Attention!

The deadline for the Feb. issue is **Jan.**

10. Send inquiries to Anne by
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St. Louis, MO 63116

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of Missouri

This form makes you a member of **both** the National and St. Louis Audubon.

Audubon is a membership organization dedicated to protecting birds, other wildlife, and their habitats. Our members are the source of our volunteer strength and the foundation of our financial support. By becoming a member, you will receive National Audubon Society's magazine as well as the St. Louis Audubon Society newsletter, *Tale Feathers*.

St. Louis Audubon Society Membership Form

Membership category desired:

Introductory / \$20
 Special two-year Introductory / \$30
 Sr. Citizen / Student/ \$15
 Local Chapter / \$15 Make checks payable
to SLAS and send to above address

Send a check made out to:
National Audubon Society
P.O. Box 220227
St. Louis, Mo. 63122

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

N01 7XCH

Please support your local chapter. Use this form to join or renew.